

*Washington, DC*—Today President Bush signed into law the Procedural Fairness for September 11th Victims Act (S. 2106/H.R. 3961), legislation co-sponsored by U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) that will remove legal obstacles for families of 9/11 victims seeking justice through the federal courts.

Shortly after 9/11, Congress mandated that victims and their families who opted out of the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund and chose to pursue civil suits could only do so in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. According to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, parties can only subpoena testimony and documents from within 100 miles of that District. As a result, many victims and their families cannot bring the witnesses or documents they need for their cases.

To correct this shortcoming, Congressman Tim Bishop introduced the bipartisan Procedural Fairness for September 11th Victims Act in the House of Representatives, following its introduction by Senator Joseph Biden and passage in the Senate. New York Congressmen John Hall, Peter King, Jerry Nadler, and Anthony Weiner were all original cosponsors of the House bill. The legislation will amend the Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act to provide for nation-wide subpoena power to all parties involved – victims, their families and the defendants – when litigating 9/11 claims.

“The victims of 9/11 deserve to have access to any and all information relevant to their cases,” said Hall. “The effects of 9/11 weren’t limited to a 100 mile radius, so it makes no sense for the law to prevent 9/11 victims and their families from obtaining the testimony and documents they need from a larger area outside the Southern District of New York.”